
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Ald. Robert J. Bauman
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County Exec Should Act Quickly To Acquire West Samaria Facility

Alderman Says County's Mental Health Care Duty Makes Takeover Logical

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker should expedite a county move to acquire the troubled West Samaria transitional living facility, Milwaukee Ald. Robert J. Bauman said today.

Questions about care and oversight at the facility, located in Ald. Bauman's 4th District at 2713 W. Richardson Pl., have swirled for years but were heightened after the 2004 beating death of resident David Rutledge outside the building and the discovery last month of the badly decomposing body of a male resident. Ald. Bauman said Milwaukee County is charged with overseeing the welfare of the residents at West Samaria and therefore should take the key step of acquiring the facility and overseeing its daily operation.

"Responsible oversight, in my opinion, starts with taking ownership and operation of the building, and not merely passing the care of these vulnerable citizens on to some third party who is not accountable to anyone," said Ald. Bauman, referring to the county's contractual agreement with the building's owner, Tri-Corp Housing, Inc.

"I certainly hope that the county executive has a better plan for the care of persons with disabilities than his plan for mass transit which he seeks to abolish. Unfortunately, recent incidents involving disabled persons under the county's care suggest his plan is the same, namely: to grow the Milwaukee County economy so that no one will need care and treatment for mental disabilities anymore," Ald. Bauman said.

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West Samaria Future/ADD ONE

On Friday Ald. Bauman and Mayor Tom Barrett called on the Board of Zoning Appeals (BOZA) to schedule a hearing to review operations at the facility. Also on Friday, the city's Department of Neighborhood Services found that a violation of the facility's plan of operation occurred and issued an order revoking the occupancy permit. If the order isn't appealed, the next step will be for DNS to placard the building.

If Tri-Corp files an appeal to the violation finding, a City Hall hearing will be scheduled before BOZA.

Ald. Bauman strongly urged BOZA not to approve the occupancy permit for West Samaria in 2004, citing a long list of reported health and safety problems at the facility.

Media reports indicate that a county caseworker was supposed to check on the welfare of the man whose body was discovered in his room at the facility. The 46-year-old man, diagnosed with schizophrenia, had reportedly been deceased for several days before being discovered by West Samaria staff after repeated inquiries about the man's status by his mother.